

# Wanaque primary candidate defends election signs

**Sunday, May 30, 2010**

Suburban Trends

Primary candidate defends signs

Dear Editor:

In response to the Thompson letter regarding signs in the May 23 Letters to the Editor section, it's sad that the Balunis group wrote a nasty letter questioning ethics without doing their homework.

When homeowners like the Thompsons sign such letters, they do a disservice to the community and unjustly malign hardworking community servants.

Let me clarify the false issue they raised related to the sign supporting Mahler, Cortellessa and Leonard that is located on Pulte's property at the corner of Ringwood Avenue and Warren Hagstrom Boulevard.

I have developed a very professional business relationship with the management of Pulte Homes as president of the Wanaque Reserve Association. As a result of our relationship, I asked Pulte for authorization to put up the sign and they agreed. The mayor had absolutely no idea that I had planned to ask Pulte at all. Furthermore, it had nothing to do, as inappropriately insinuated, that Pulte would receive anything in return from anyone.

The most important item that was overlooked in the letter was that the Wanaque Reserve Association hired a third-party independent engineering firm to review all work and approvals related to the building of the Wanaque Reserve. This is called the Transition Process and is intended to protect the Wanaque Reserve homeowners against shoddy building and code violation practices prior to the Association taking responsibility for the property.

As a result, it would be impossible for Pulte to be given a "pass" by the town on anything. Any "quid pro quo" would have been immediately picked up by the engineering firm.

I live at the Reserve. Why would I want to give Pulte a "pass" on anything in the homes that I, my neighbors, and my friends live in? Furthermore, I have a fiduciary responsibility to the Wanaque Reserve homeowners as its president, which makes me liable if I do not represent the best interests of the homeowners. Why would I want to jeopardize my reputation and future?

The implication that the purchase of the Pulte sales office was also a "cozy Pulte deal" between Mahler and myself is an absolute falsehood and borders on libel. Neither Dan Mahler nor I voted on the purchase.

The Pulte sales office purchase and rental to the county is, after taking all expenses into account, a positive net revenue generator for the community to offset taxes and provide needed county services. If anyone doubts it, I challenge them to meet with me and go through the financials versus making unsupported statements.

It appears to me that the Balunis group believes negative campaigning and false statements are the way to win an election. It's sad and unfortunate that people in our community sign letters maligning hardworking community servants like Dan Mahler and others without the facts to support their libelous claims.

I would hope that it stops and the Balunis group starts campaigning on the issues.

Dominick Cortellessa, Councilman  
Wanaque